

Editorial

When I was informed that I had been elected Editor of *The Analysis of Verbal Behavior* (TAVB), I was both flattered and apprehensive. I was flattered for obvious reasons, not the least of which was that I knew there were other equally qualified candidates. My apprehension stemmed from the realization that I had to take over the helm of a journal captained solely by its only other editor, Mark Sundberg, for 15 years.

To mention everything Mark did for the journal would be like trying to describe everything a good mother does for her baby. To borrow an analogy from B. F. Skinner, Mark "had" the journal, and, along with others, in particular Cindy Sundberg, who was assistant editor of TAVB for more than 10 years, sacrificed much to nourish and keep the journal healthy after its birth. In fact, one could say that Mark and Cindy had not two but three children. But now TAVB has grown up and left home, and for the next 3 years it will be my responsibility. It is a cliché, but Mark's are big shoes to fill; indeed, no one can fill them in the same way and, fortunately for me, I don't have to. Now that the Association for Behavior Analysis has taken over the publication of TAVB, my job as editor will be much easier than Mark's ever was. I will strive to maintain the same high quality that has characterized the journal for the past 15 years.

In this, my first issue as editor, I am pleased to be able to offer a collection of stimulating articles as well as a special section in which 15 notable behavior analysts have contributed their views in the form of brief commentaries on "The Current Status and Future Directions of the Analysis of Verbal Behavior." As the articles in this issue attest, there is a high caliber of ongoing scholarship in verbal behavior by behavior analysts. And if one listens carefully, one can hear some common themes echoed in these pages. For example, although the articles deal with a variety of topics, they all show

that behavior analysts are beginning to recognize the necessity of confronting more complex issues in the analysis of verbal behavior. This can be seen in David Palmer's interpretive analysis of the role of listener behavior in the structural regularities of ongoing verbal behavior, in the discussion by John Austin, Peter Delaney, Steve Hayes, Douglas White, Richard Bissett, Tom Critchfield, and Kimberly Epting regarding the potential benefits and pitfalls of the use of the cognitive verbal report method of protocol analysis by behavior analysts, and in William Hutchison's and John Donahoe's brief commentaries on the use of behavioral and neural computer modeling of complex verbal relationships.

Another theme that emerges from the pages of this issue is that behavior analysts seem to be expanding their experimental and theoretical interests, both within behavior analysis and outside the field. An example of the former is Genae Hall's brief commentary suggesting that the synthesis of different specialty areas within behavior analysis that cover the same behavioral events might yield a more comprehensive view of the subject matter with less duplication of effort. The interpretation of linguistic phenomena traditionally of interest to linguists and cognitive psychologists, as offered in the articles by David Palmer and by Peter Delaney and John Austin, the brief commentary by Ullin Place, and Michael Hixson's analysis of some of the ape language research and its implications for the analysis of verbal behavior, show that behavior analysts are still using their interpretive skills to understand everyday verbal relationships as well as verbal behavior research conducted by researchers who are not behavior analysts.

One can also hear calls for behavior analysts to look even farther afield in their research and theorizing, whether it be (a) the possibility of incorporating methodological

designs and theoretical concepts not formulated by behavior analysts, as outlined in the aforementioned articles on protocol analysis, (b) the experimental analysis of relationships historically claimed by mainstream psychologists, such as the development of verbal behavior in children, as mentioned in the brief commentary by Charles Catania and Eliot Shimoff, (c) the analysis of such traditional topics as second-language learning and talk therapy, as mentioned in the brief commentaries by John Mabry and Kurt Salzinger, respectively, or (d) the appropriation of conceptual tools from other disciplines to help in our understanding of complex verbal relationships, as suggested in the brief commentaries by John Donahoe and Chris Cherpas.

Whether the common themes of complexity and expansion represent trends or not, I

believe they show that behavior analysts are beginning to tackle some of the thorniest problems in the analysis of verbal behavior, the solutions to which can only lead to new levels of understanding. And as noted in the brief commentaries by Terry Knapp, Joe Spradlin, and Mark Sundberg, *TAVB* has already figured importantly in the dissemination of relevant research on and theorizing about verbal behavior and will, we hope, continue to do so in the future.

I want to thank everyone who helped me launch this issue of *TAVB*, including Mike Perone, Bill Potter, Kathy Hill, and the authors represented herein, but especially Mark Sundberg, and my loving wife, Julie Riggott.

Hank Schlinger
Editor